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Incident #149 -- North Jutland -- 19 January 1948

There is nothing in the meager description of this incident that precludes the possibility of the objects' being meteors. The description would also allow for their being rockets. However, the explosion of the objects favors the meteoric hypothesis.

It might be well to note the similarity of this and other Scandanavian reports to the "green flash" objects reported from New Mexico.

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Incident #150 -- Swedish coast -- 1 March 1948

The description given here is entirely too fragmentary for any conclusions to be drawn. The object sighted could have been a meteor, a rocket, or a guided missile. The fact that it left no trail in the sky argues against its having been a meteor.

Note the similarity of this incident to #149 and #133.

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Incident #151 -- Indianapolis, Indiana -- 29 July 1948

This incident and #152 are being considered together by this investigator, because they both occurred in Indianapolis, were separated by just two days, were observed at approximately the same time of day, and include certain similarities of description.

Both incidents are clearly non-astronomical.

Drawings are available for both objects observed, and, although they are considerably different, they might conceivably represent the same object viewed on edge and in plan. Both have approximately the same shape, although the scale given by one observer is about three times that given by the other. Both have 3:1 ratios of length to width. If these objects were real, it seems to be straining coincidence too far to assume that they were entirely independent of each other.

Were there by any chance some special glider experiments going on in the vicinity of Indianapolis at that time?

Barring hallucinations, these two incidents and incidents #17, 40, 75, and 84 seem to be the most tangible, from the standpoint of description, of all those reported, and the most difficult to explain away as sheer nonsense.

It should be noted that both incidents #151 and 152 had two observers.

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Incident #152 -- Indianapolis, Indiana -- 31 July 1948

There is no astronomical explanation for the object observed in this incident.

See report on incident #151 for discussion.

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Incident #153 -- Georgia -- 5 August 1948

The limited description which is offered here is consistent with that of a disintegrating fireball, in spite of the observer's statement that the object was not a meteor or falling star. Actually, fireballs bear little resemblance to the ordinary, frequently-seen meteors. The trail of sparks at the end is sometimes associated with a fireball.

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Incident #154, 154a -- Columbus, Ohio -- 2 August 1948

This incident is in two respects unique among all those investigated: 1) it is the only object that is defined solely by an outline, appearing vacant inside, so that the sky was visible through it; and 2) it is similar to an object that this investigator viewed as a boy.

The writer's recollection has remained vivid throughout these many years. The object he saw could best be described as a floating ellipse, like a wire hoop travelling slowly across the sky. The motion was uniform, and the form of the object changed slowly, as though the hoop were being distorted. The object was observed for at least ten minutes, with several witnesses, until it finally disappeared in the distance. The writer had dismissed the object as some sort of unusual atmospheric phenomenon, perhaps a travelling air pocket.

Because of the similarity between this observation and that reported in incident #154, the latter has a special interest to this investigator. In the recent incident, however, the tail of smoke is an added feature.

There is obviously no astronomical explanation for these incidents -- the most plausible explanation probably lies in the field of meteorology.

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Incident #155 -- Columbus, Ohio -- 31 July 1948

There is no astronomical explanation for this incident.

If the information offered is to be given any weight at all, the most likely explanation is that a cluster of balloons, or a balloon with several fire-pots hanging below it, was observed. Corroboration for this interpretation is probably furnished by incidents #156 and 157, which occurred a few hours later near this location. The object reported in #157 proved to be a "county-fair" type balloon.

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Incident #156 -- Columbus, Ohio -- 31 July 1948

This incident and incident #157, which obviously refer to the same object, must be considered together. The object fell to earth and was retrieved; it proved to be a "county fair balloon," once quite common in this part of the country. Usually they are lighted in mid-afternoon, having one or more fire-pots to provide the hot air. They then rise and stay aloft for several hours before finally falling to earth.

It is highly probable that the object described in incident #155, which was observed a few hours earlier on the same day and near the same location, was this object, seen while it was still high in the sky.

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Incident #157 -- Columbus, Ohio -- 31 July 1948

The object described in this incident can be easily identified as a "county fair balloon."

See report on incident #156 for discussion.

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Incident #158 -- Groveport, Ohio -- 1 August 1948

With two essential items missing (speed with which the trail was formed and length of time involved in the formation), it is difficult to come to a definite conclusion concerning the origin of the object observed, but it is entirely possible that it was parts of the smoke trail of a fireball. Fireball trails have been known to act in the manner described. The witness states that the streak was not like an anti-aircraft shell burst or a vapor trail from a plane. He implies that the motion of the object forming the trail was very rapid, and that the distance was considerable. At least, nothing is said which is contrary to the meteoric hypothesis.

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Incident #159 -- Worthington, Ohio -- 30 July 1948

No astronomical explanation is suggested by the description of this incident.

This investigator wonders whether an advertising "blimp" might not have been in the neighborhood. The time of observation was just after sunset, and a blimp would probably have given the appearance described.

It should be noted that the size of the object and distance are not stated.

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Incident #160 -- Dravosburg, Pennsylvania -- 4 July 1948

There is no astronomical explanation for this incident.

The date of occurrence, July 4, suggests that the object seen might have been a part of some celebration -- for instance, a lighted balloon, or even a "county fair" type of balloon.

Or there may be a much simpler explanation for the incident: the observer was very close to the Allegheny County airport. Does the airport have record of either pilot balloon or small aircraft in the air at the time of the sighting? Since when the object seemed to stop it also changed direction, the stopping may have been merely the effect of perspective.

This incident does not appear to have any relation to incident #161.

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Incident #161 -- McKeesport, Pennsylvania -- c. 8 July 1948

Information offered by these two untrained, uncritical, and excitable observers can be given little weight. There does not appear to be anything astronomical about this incident; chances are that the two women saw ordinary aircraft with sunlight reflected from fuselage but not from wings.

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Balloon reported

Incident #162 -- Hamel, Minnesota -- 11 August 1948

No astronomical explanation is possible for this incident. A meteorite would not have descended so gently, nor would it have risen again.

It seems incredible that this could have been an actual physical occurrence, but if it was, it is doubly unfortunate that no mature observers were at hand. If the object did land just a few feet away, one would think that even children would have given a more detailed description. Is it known whether the children have normal vision? To one with myopic vision, even a buzzard or hawk gliding to a landing might appear as a strange object.

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Incident #163 — VanNuys, California -- 21 July 1948

Since a complete description of this incident is given in numerous reports from Mt. Wilson Observatory and Griffith Planetarium, since the observations there were made with telescopes by experienced observers, and since their descriptions agree that the object was in all respects balloon-like, there is nothing that this investigator can add. The object was evidently an unidentified balloon.

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Incident #164, a, b -- Uniontown, Pennsylvania -- 29 June 1948

There is no astronomical explanation for this incident. Its occurrence at the time of a thunderstorm suggests that the report might be referred to an expert on ball lightning to see whether this might be a possible explanation.

Another possibility is that the observers saw a beacon searchlight projected against clouds, although if this were the case, it should have continued visible at regular intervals.

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Incident #165, a -- Chamblee, Georgia -- 23 July 1948

The object reported in incident #165 and 165a (which presumably refer to the same thing) can be easily explained as having been a very bright meteor. The majority of observers agree that the object did not manouver, was on a steady course, and lost altitude slowly.

Numerous other reports (included with incident #144), from the vicinity of Augusta, which are widely divergent as to time, direction of motion, and color of the object, all appear to refer to a bright meteor. It may be that these scattered reports all describe the object of incident #165, a. It could be, of course, that the state of Georgia was treated to several fireballs in one evening, but it seems more likely that we have here an example of serious dispersion in the description of one object.

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Incident #166 -- Los Angeles, California -- 30 August 1948

The observer of this incident states that the object looked like a rocket and was larger than a B-29. He does not give the distance, but estimates the altitude as well over 20,000 feet. At this implied distance, it appears to this investigator that resemblance to a rocket must have been largely subjective.

Although a rocket cannot be ruled out, it is also possible that the object seen was a bright meteor. If the hour of observation given is correct, it was late twilight. It seems that a bright meteor appearing at this time could give the general impression of a rocket leaving a trail.

The report states that the object was observed through field glasses taken from a German 88 mm. artillery piece and that each lens was 8" in diameter. (This is an improbably large size for a field glass.) If the object completely filled the lens at that given altitude, either it was of a truly tremendous size or the glass was out of focus. Furthermore, the telegram and summary state that the object was travelling from west to east (another report says from north to south); if it had been a rocket heading east, the landing would probably have been reported.

All in all, the evidence supports the conclusion that the object was more likely a bright meteor than a huge rocket.

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Incident #167 -- Pacific Ocean: 19° 08' N, 104° 05' E -- 6 May 1948

The object observed here was probably an exploding fireball seen head-on and seen only at the time of actual explosion. This, with partial cloud coverage, could easily explain the absence of a trail.

It is not likely that lights sighted on the water surface or aircraft sighted later had any relation to the original object.

If the object had been a shell fired from the USS Boxer, it appears improbable that only one shell would have been observed.

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Incident #168 -- The Hague -- 20 July 1948

The information given here is too limited even for guesswork. It is extremely difficult to take at face value the report of an aircraft with two decks and no wings travelling with supersonic speed, even if "seen four times through clouds" by the chief of the Court of Damage and his daughter. It seems much more probable that the observers had a subjective impression of ordinary aircraft or a fireball. Even though these two items are at opposite ends of the scale, there is nothing in the evidence to favor one or the other.

In passing, it is interesting to note that this incident occurred just found days before the famous "Alabama space ship." Maybe our visitors from Mars were cruising around!

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Incident #169 -- Maplewood, Ohio -- 29 August 1948

There does not appear to be any astronomical explanation for this incident.

There is some chance that the object could have been a weather balloon in the process of disintegration.

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Incident #170 -- Adapazari, Turkey -- c. 5 May 1948

It is extremely unlikely that there is any astronomical explanation for this incident. The information given is very limited, but it points definitely to the probability that the objeot or objects sighted were rockets. The report indicates that one rocket-like objeot was recovered.

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Incident #171 -- Moscow, Russia -- 3 August 1948

There is no astronomical explanation for this incident. Perhaps the Russians were experimenting with their own or a captured German dirigible.

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Incident #172, a, b, c -- Fargo, North Dakota -- 1 October 1948

There is no conceivable astronomical explanation for this much-examined and much-discussed incident.

Analyses by a psychologist and a meteorological expert would be of importance here.

It seems significant to this investigator that other witnesses of the incident did not observe the complex tactics reported by Lieutenant Gorman, although they were presumably seeing the same thing. Is it possible, then, that the pilot "took on" a lighted weather balloon? (See report on incident #207 for further discussion.)

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Incident #173 -- Shreveport, Iowa -- 18 September 1948

There is no astronomical explanation for this incident.

It appears probable that a balloon was under observation.

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Incident #174 -- near New Orleans, Louisiana -- 1 October 1948

There is a strong possibility that the object sighted here was nothing other than a fireball. The description of the object itself particularly suggests this: white hot, with red flames trailing. The course and size also fit in with the fireball hypothesis. It is an unusual time of day to see a slow-moving meteor, since in the early morning they strike nearly head-on; however, this one could have been seen after the earth's atmosphere had slowed it down very appreciably.

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Incident #176A -- Santa Fe, New Mexico -- 23 September 1948

The evidence here is so contradictory that it is very difficult even to attempt any identification. For example, one observer states that the object was stationary; the other that it was moving at a speed of 700-800 MPH. One says the elevation was 45°; the other says 70°. It is hard to believe that they were looking at the same object, even though it is so stated.

Considering #176 (Mr. Angier's statement) alone, it is possible that the object observed was the planet Venus. The location is is given as southwest and the elevation as 70°, which correspond approximately with the position of Venus at the time. The magnitude of the planet was -3.8; it could have been visible in the daylight sky. It would have appeared, however, more like a pinpoint of bright light than like a "dime in the sky." It seems unlikely that it would have been noticed at all, but since the observer was looking closely at the sky ("watching a government plane come in"), he might have chanced upon it.

Considering the vast discrepancies in the two reports, it may not be amiss to suggest another, far fetched, interpretation for one or both. The moon at the time was in gibbous phase, and was a little off the horizon north of west. Most people are so unused to thinking of the moon in that position in the daytime that they fail

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to identify it. This is particularly true if one's eyesight is not of the best. While this hypothesis has little correspondence to either report, as the evidence is stated, it is worth mentioning, especially since it may be met in future citings of incidents.

It seems far more probable that some type of balloon was the object in this case.

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Incident #176, a -- Castro's Ranch, California -- 23 September 1948

The two observers of this incident make, in several respects, directly contradictory statements: diffuse object versus definite box-shaped object, easterly line of flight versus northwesterly, etc. They agree on speed (very fast).

It does not seem likely that the incident can be explained astronomically. The only possible astronomical hypothesis would be that the object observed was the smoke mass from an exploded fireball, which would probably have an amoeba-like shape, agreeing with the description of one witness. At noon a meteor outward-bound from the region of the sun could approach the earth head-on, explode, and not leave any long trail.

However, in view of the conflicting descriptions, very little weight can be given to the whole incident. Perhaps the observers were looking at different things. There was a west-bound United Airlines plane in the vicinity at approximately that time; one observer may have seen that. The description of one observer suggests a box kite, such as those once used by weather observers.

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Incident #177 -- Kentwood, Louisiana -- 5 September 1948

Contradictory opinions concerning the existence of the alleged unusual noise and the dubious personality of the reporter of this incident make serious attention to the incident impossible.

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Incident #178 -- Honolulu, T. H. -- 18 October 1948

There does not appear to be any astronomical explanation for this incident. The moon had not yet risen at the time the object was sighted, although it was about to rise in the northeast.

The object may have been a balloon reflecting the light of the setting sun.

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Incident #179 -- San Francisco, California -- October 1947

There is no astronomical explanation for this incident. The extremely incoherent and unreliable nature of the report of the incident makes serious consideration futile.

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Incident #180a, b -- South Bend, Indiana -- 13 October 1948

There is no astronomical explanation for this incident.

Reflection of the sun from a balloon or aircraft appearing in foreshortened position might possibly account for the description given here.

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Incident #181 -- near Dayton, Ohio -- 14 October 1948

There is no astronomical explanation for this incident. Since the speed of the plane was 160 MPH, if it had passed through a cluster of small balloons, a flock of migrating birds, or any other group of relatively stationary objects, they would undoubtedly have appeared to observers within as objects whizzing by, much as telephone poles appear from a window of a speeding train. Little credence can be given to the pilot's statement that the objects could not have been migrating birds; there would have been no time for identification.

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Incident #132 -- At sea: 74° 40' W, 36° 42' N -- 15 October 1948

The bearings and motion given in this report by the Master of the SS Gulfport do not correspond to those of any celestial object.

From the reported size and shape and the statement that the object had a bright center, one can surmise that it was spherical -- probably a balloon.

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Incident #183 -- Japan -- 15 October 1948

There does not appear to be anything astronomical about this incident.

Radar experts should determine the reliability of the data, particularly concerning acceleration rates.

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Incident #184 -- Winona, Minnesota -- 20 October 1948

This incident and #185 appear to be a clear-cut case of a fireball. Strongest evidence is the fact that the object was seen in several communities at the same time. While the reports given in the Minneapolis Morning Tribune article conflict in minor details, the general sense of the description of all observers fits that of a fireball.

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Incident #185, a, b -- Minneapolis, Minnesota -- 20 October 1948

The object reported in this incident is the same as that in #184, seen from a different locality. The description of the incident leaves no question but that the object observed was a fireball.

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Incident #186 -- near Sterling, Utah -- 16 October 1948

There is nothing astronomical in this incident.

It should be pointed out that, since the object was in sight just a few seconds, even a conventional aircraft under peculiar lighting conditions might have given the reported appearance. The estimated distance of 500 feet, if correct, should have allowed much more detailed observation. Probably the distance is grossly underestimated.

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Incident #187 -- Godman Air Force Base, Kentucky -- 19 August 1948

There can be no question but that the object sighted in this incident was Venus. It was just three weeks past its period of greatest brilliancy, and was separating from the sun. The close agreement between the observed position of the object and the actual position of Venus, determined by others concerned with the incident and rechecked by this investigator, is convincing.

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Incident #138 -- Goose Bay, Labrador -- 29 October 1948

There appears to be nothing astronomical in this incident.

Judging from the speed and apparent size of the object, it seems that a balloon may have been picked up by the radar.

Radar experts should evaluate these sightings.

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Incident #189 -- Albany, Georgia -- 22 September 1948

There is nothing astronomical in this incident.

Since the object looked like a drone, perhaps it was one.

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Incident #190, a, b — Neubiberg AF Base, Germany -- 11 October 1948

The position of this object in the sky (northeast at an altitude of 70°) rules out any possible astronomical explanation. The moon had not yet risen at the time.

The description appears to fit that of a high-altitude balloon.

Question: If there had been "no release of airborne weather equipment prior to or during sighting," where did the information concerning winds aloft come from?

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Incident #191 -- near Junction City, Kansas -- 24 October 1948

There is no astronomical explanation for this incident. The description given is sketchy and would be entitled to no weight whatever if it had not been reported by a responsible USAF officer. With size, shape, time in sight, tactics, and sound not stated, it is impossible to say anything further than that this seems to be a typical example of the "garden variety" of flying saucer.

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Incident #192 -- near Moorhead, Minnesota -- 24 October 1948

Despite the observer's statement that the object seen could not have been a meteor, the possibility is not ruled out. Early evening is the most propitious time for the observation of slow, bright meteors. This is the time of day when a meteor inbound to the sun and caught by the earth's gravitational field would appear to travel from east to west, and could appear to rise slightly. Most people identify meteors with sharp, fast flashes of light, which are not at all characteristic of slow fireballs. The observed turn is difficult but not impossible to explain; this investigator would prefer, however, to think that it was an illusion caused by perspective.

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Incident #193 -- near Neuoiberg, Germany -- 24 October 1948

It is very unlikely that this incident has any astronomical explanation. No trail nor luminescence was observed, and the object flew a straight and level course. Time in sight (two minutes) also effectively rules out any possible astronomical hypothesis.

Could the object reported here have been a conventional aircraft viewed in foreshortened aspect?

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Incident #194 -- near Andrews Field -- 3 November 1948

No astronomical explanation is possible for this incident.

The object reported has been independently identified as an MIT cosmic ray balloon cluster.

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Incident #195 -- Goose Bay, Labrador -- 31 October 1948

The object reported in this incident has no astronomical explanation: speed was too slow and time in sight too long.

The object, observed on a radarscope, was probably a balloon or unidentified aircraft.

Question: Is the speed indicated the radial velocity of the object or true space velocity? If the latter, it is obviously too slow for conventional aircraft.

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Incident #196 -- Goose Bay, Labrador -- 1 November 1948

There is no astronomical explanation for this incident.

The object could have been balloon radiosonde.

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Incident #197 -- Richmond, Indiana -- 5 November 1948

This incident very likely has an astronomical explanation; the object sighted was probably Venus. Venus rose on November 5 at about 5:30 A. M. and an hour later would have been a little south of east at an altitude of about 15°. Its magnitude was -3.4, or about six times brighter than the brightest star in the sky. The photograph taken of the object sighted does not contradict this hypothesis.

It is unlikely that the object observed was the bright comet (1948L) discovered one day earlier in the southern hemisphere, for this comet at that time was very far to the south and east, almost on the horizon, and was very much fainter than Venus. If the object seen here had been the comet, the persons observing it could lay claim to the first discovery. It was discovered one day later in Australia because of much more favorable location.

Venus, of course was visible all during the autumn of 1948 in approximately the same position as that in which it was seen on the morning of November 5.

It is also of interest to note that Mercury had its greatest western elongation on November 5, but it rose just at the beginning of the morning twilight and would therefore have been just rising at the time of this incident. Furthermore, Mercury was much less brilliant than Venus.